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SENSITIVE
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TAGS: PGOV DR
SUBJECT: PRD ANNOUNCES OFFICIAL RESULTS OF PARTY ELECTIONS;
LOSERS CONTINUE TO CRY FOUL

REF: SANTO DOMINGO 1140

(U) Sensitive but Unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: The Revolutionary Democratic Party's (PRD) National Organizing Committee for the 27th National Ordinary Convention, on 9/30, announced the official results of the 9/27 internal party balloting. The final results confirmed an overwhelming victory for party President Miguel Vargas Maldonado and his candidates for Secretary General and Secretary for Organization. The leading losing candidates for both positions, Guido Gomez Mazara and Tony Pena Guaba, continue to claim fraud. The winning candidates and other party officials deny the allegations while avoiding getting into a slugging match with their accusers. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) The official results of the PRD Convention are:

-- Ratification of Vargas as the PRD's President: 96.35 percent in favor;

-- Elimination of Article 185 of the General Party Statute (this article prohibited the party's president from running as a candidate for national office): 93.54 percent in favor;

-- Orlando Jorge Mera declared the winner in the race for Secretary General with 61.55 percent of the vote (runner-up Guido Gomez Mazara polled 38.99 percent); and

-- Geanilda Vasquez Almanzar declared the winner in the race of Secretary of Organization with 48.48 percent of the vote (runner-up Tony Pena Guaba was a distant second with 39.95 percent).

In announcing the results, National Organizing Committee Chairman Tomas Hernandez Alberto noted that any formal challenges had to be filed within 48 hours and needed to refer to specific Actas (vote tally sheets); general allegations would not suffice.

¶3. (U) The two main losing candidates, Gomez and Pena, continue to claim that they were the true winners of the Convention and that Vargas and his supporters in the party's electoral machinery perpetrated a fraud against them. Gomez, in a series of media appearances and press conferences, alleged that a large number of Actas were altered by PRD electoral officials to add votes to Jorge's totals, and that Vargas then personally pressured one of Gomez' official representatives to sign off on the tallies. Gomez also presented transcripts of what he claimed were Blackberry text messages between high-level members of Vargas's team, including Mera and Peggy Cabral (wife of the late PRD leader

Jose Francisco Pena Gomez), in which the texters discussed carrying out the fraud. He concluded his presentations by demanding that Vargas convoke a meeting of the PRD's Political Committee within two weeks to review the results, threatening to release additional text messages compromising an unnamed high-level official within the party. When asked by the media how he obtained the transcripts of the purported text messages, Gomez refused to divulge his source.

¶4. (U) Pena, in turn, vowed on 10/1 to formally object to over one thousand Actas, adding that if his protests are rejected he is prepared to take his case to the national Central Electoral Board (JCE) and even to the Socialist International (of which the PRD is a member). In his press conference, Pena presented copies of Actas which he said were accepted by the party's electoral authorities even though they did not have the requisite signatures, evidenced similar handwriting even though they were ostensibly from different locations, did not have the same seal as that employed by the voting location, or registered more ballots as having been cast than there were voters.

¶5. (U) Mera, who was re-elected Secretary General, proudly proclaimed in triumph, "My victory was overwhelming, clear and clean." Jose Leonel Cabrera, spokesman for the PRD's bloc of congressional deputies called on Gomez to accept his defeat and recognize that this "does not signify that his world has ended." Other officials accused by Gomez/Pena of complicity in the alleged fraud also took pains not to confront them directly, rejecting the charges while at the same time taking a condescending attitude towards the pair, yet avoiding getting into a verbal slugging match. For

example, Andy Dahuarjre, one of those fingered by Gomez, responded by noting his, "respect for Guido's right to express himself, including respect and defense of his right even to lie."

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT: The PRD internal election results appear to be a fait accompli. Gomez and Pena may insist on pursuing their appeals, but it is unlikely that either will succeed in his efforts. Their objections to many of the Actas seem to be undercut by the fact that Gomez' representative signed off on the results. And the transcripts presented by Gomez, however compromising they may appear to be, are unlikely to be properly authenticated. The media give every indication of realizing this: after initially giving sensationalist publicity to the fraud claims, press and broadcast sources are now starting to treat the allegations as yesterday's news. What remains unclear is how the warring PRD factions will go about uniting for the upcoming congressional and municipal elections. Given the importance of those races to their own political futures, it is expected that a way will be found. END COMMENT.

LAMBERT